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Our Lives 2023 Wave 9 Methodological Report



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Accreditations

ISO 27001: ISO 27001 is the highest standard for information security management systems, providing you with assurance that Wallis systems, processes and people are keeping your data safe.

ISO 20252: ISO 20252 is the international standard for market, opinion and social research, and ensures all stages of the research project are delivered to a quality that can be relied upon.

The Research Society member: The Research Society is Australia's largest research and insights community. Members have access to the latest industry knowledge, tools, quality assurances and professional standards.

ADIA Trust Mark Research Organisation: The Australian Data and Insights Association (ADIA) is the peak industry body for data, insights and research organisations in Australia. ADIA Trust Mark research organisations are compliant with the highest ethical, quality and privacy standards.

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Cyber security: Wallis is an acknowledged leader in data protection and privacy. Our system is regularly subjected to external penetration testing and we are a Privacy Awareness Week supporter – committed to sharing our knowledge with others. Wallis is also active member of the Australian Cyber Security Centre (ACSC) Partnership Program.

B Corporation: Wallis has been certified by B Lab Australia and New Zealand having shown that we meet high standards of social and environmental performance, transparency, and accountability. At Wallis, our approach to corporate social responsibility reflects our mission - to have a positive impact on society.

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Overview

The Social Futures and Life Pathways project, more commonly known as ‘Our Lives’ is a longitudinal study managed by the Australian Catholic University (ACU). The study has followed a large cohort of young Queenslanders from when they were attending Year 8 in numerous high schools across Queensland in 2006 up until present day where they are now aged 29 - 30 years old. A survey has been conducted approximately every two years.

This survey, now in its ninth wave, focuses on employment, education, and relationships, their views on social and political issues, as well as an exploration of their life at 30.

The ninth wave of the Our Lives survey commenced with a soft launch on 13 September 2023 and remained open for CATI completion until 15 December 2023, and online completion until 8 January 2024.

These initiatives helped achieve 1,494 fully completed interviews and 31 partially completed interviews, which translated to 1,525 participating.

A total of 1,432 respondents completed the full survey online. A further 93 sample members completed their survey via CATI.

This report focuses on the outcomes of the Wave 9 Our Lives cohort (2023).

Methodology

Our Lives uses a multimode approach, giving respondents choice in the way they participate; online, in their own time (within the allocated time frames) and from a location of their choosing, or over the phone with the assistance of a CATI interviewer.

Sample members were primarily contacted by Primary Approach Email (PAE) or SMS to complete the survey online. The email and SMS invitations each contained a personalised link to the online survey.

In 2021, there was a shift in the methodology to a predominantly online survey, this approach continued in 2023. The main purpose of the limited CATI hours available was to call (or prompt) respondents who had not yet completed the survey online as a reminder, or to offer the option to email or send an

SMS with a personalised link to the online survey. CATI calling resources and hours were mainly targeted towards respondents who required more encouragement to complete the survey.

Wallis was able to keep track of survey members who had commenced their survey online but were unable to complete it entirely. In these cases, Wallis then contacted these survey members via telephone to remind them that the online survey was deemed incomplete and to determine if respondents were willing to conduct the survey over the phone instead.

Reminders were sent by email or SMS throughout the fieldwork period to those who had not yet completed their survey.

All interviewers and supervisors participated in a briefing conducted immediately prior to the start of CATI fieldwork. The training program was designed to review the required interviewing skills and to ensure that all those working on the project were familiar with its unique requirements which is discussed in more detail in the sections below.

Sample

The sample of 2,186 respondents for the Our Lives Wave 9 sample was derived based on the outcomes from Wave 8. Respondents who refused or were uncontactable during the previous wave were excluded from the Wave 9 sample.



1 Questionnaire Development, Briefing and Monitoring

1.1 Questionnaire design and development

The initial 2023 questionnaire for the Wave 9 survey was developed by ACU in collaboration with Wallis prior to launching the survey.

Further changes and developments to the questionnaire, particularly the removal of several COVID-19 related questions, continued through regular videoconference discussions and emails between ACU and Wallis. The final questionnaire was approved on 15 August 2023.

1.2 New questions in Wave 9

Various new topics and questions were introduced to the new Wave 9 questionnaire, these included:

- (A11) What is the highest level of study you have completed since leaving high school?
- (D2A) Later this year/recently, Australians will decide/voted at a referendum whether to alter the Australian Constitution to recognise the First Peoples of Australia by establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice. Do/did you approve this proposed alteration?
- (D3) Here is a list of possible threats to the vital interests of Australia in the next ten years. How important do you regard each of these?
 - Cyberattacks from other countries
 - China's foreign policy
 - Climate change
 - A severe downturn in the global economy
 - Russia's foreign policy
 - Potential global pandemics
 - International terrorism
- (D4) During your lifetime, what kind of impact do you feel AI have in each of the following areas?
 - Health and medicine
 - Security and justice
 - Education and learning
 - The economy
 - Culture and the arts
 - Society as a whole

- Your own career pathway
- Your own wellbeing

▮ (D10) How important are the following factors for getting ahead in life?

- Coming from a wealthy family
- Having well-educated parents
- Having a good education yourself
- Having ambition
- Working hard
- Knowing the right people
- A person's race
- A person's religion
- A person's gender

▮ (G1-4) Reflections on Life at 30

The following questions from the Wave 8 questionnaire were removed and not included in the Wave 9 questionnaire, including:

- ▮ (A29) How did you get this job?
- ▮ (B5) How important is it to buy your own home by the time you turn 30? Would you say...?
- ▮ (C4) During 2020/2021, did you receive a wage subsidy through JobKeeper?
- ▮ (C5) During 2020, did you apply for and receive an early release of your superannuation?
- ▮ (C6) What was the main use of your lump sum superannuation withdrawal?
- ▮ (D2) How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about vaccines?
- ▮ (D3) There are different opinions about the effects that immigrants have on Australia. How strongly do you agree or disagree that...
- ▮ (D4) Over the past two years, have you done any of the following things to express your views or represent your interests?
- ▮ (D5) For each of the following statements, please specify whether it is true or false.
- ▮ (D6) How strongly do you agree or disagree with each of these statements regarding politics?
- ▮ (D8) Would you call yourself a...?
- ▮ (D11) How important are the following for you?
- ▮ (E8) How likely are you to get a COVID-19 vaccination when it becomes available to you?
- ▮ (E9) What are reasons that make you less likely to get a COVID-19 vaccine?

1.3 Questionnaire overview

Main topic areas of the questionnaire were as follows:

Figure 1 Questionnaire main topic areas



Study, work and careers



Relationships and living situation



Financial situation



Politics and society



Health and wellbeing



Parental support



Life at 30

1.4 Questionnaire setup

Prior to the piloting stage the questionnaire was set up for online and CATI completion and the following checking process was used:

- ▶ The questionnaire was set up by the Senior Data Analyst assigned to the project;
- ▶ CATI/Online questionnaire initially checked by the Wallis consultancy team;
- ▶ CATI/Online questionnaire checked by the Wallis Field Manager and Field Supervisors;
- ▶ CATI/Online questionnaire checked by the ACU Our Lives team;
- ▶ Feedback actioned by Senior Data Analyst.

1.5 Interviewer briefing

The Wave 9 interviewer briefing was conducted on 11 October 2023. All interviewers were actively involved in a virtual PowerPoint presentation. All interviewers and supervisors who attended virtually were emailed an electronic copy of the detailed briefing notes to read ahead of the commencement of the presentation.

Once again, Wallis was fortunate to have Dr Jonathan Smith from ACU attend the briefing by videoconference and provided a client perspective of the project.

Following the introduction by Dr Smith, the interviewers were taken through the PowerPoint presentation which then led into group questionnaire practise session. During the group questionnaire practise session, a test version of the CATI survey was shared on-screen and each interviewer took turns in asking a question. The Wallis consultancy team played the role of the 'respondent' to ensure a broad range of skips and questions were asked.

The interviewers were then given the opportunity to conduct individual interview practice on the CATI system. This allowed each interviewer to conduct simulated interviews to gain a thorough understanding of the questionnaire before they started 'live' interviewing.



Briefing refresher: The entire briefing was recorded and was accessible to interviewers and supervisors throughout fieldwork if there was anything they needed to re-watch or re-visit.

1.6 Help desk



1.6.1 1800 phone number

A 1800 phone number set up by Wallis was included on all correspondence to encourage respondents to phone in to update contact details, request to have the link resent to a new email address, obtain further information on the survey, or make or change an appointment to complete the survey over the phone.

The Wallis 1800 number was managed and monitored by the field supervisors and was attended during the hours of 9am to 6pm Monday to Friday and most evenings and weekends, with an answering machine service for calls received out of operating hours. The 1800 number is open all year to allow respondents to contact Wallis if they would like to update their contact details during the year.



1.6.2 Our Lives inbox

Two dedicated Our Lives email addresses remain available to respondents, one managed by ACU and the other managed by Wallis.

A team of Wallis staff responded to general queries and in some cases requests to be removed from the survey.

During the 2023 survey, twelve emails were received from Our Lives respondents, and were a mix of general feedback (n=2), requests to update contact details (n=7), and requests for assistance completing the survey online (n=3).

One respondent emailed the Wallis Our Lives inbox with the following message:



I was thinking about this recently. Thought it was around that time again...I think my answers might actually be a bit different this time round!

The Our Lives inbox is also open all year to allow respondents to contact Wallis if they would like to update their contact details during the year.

1.7 Monitoring data quality

Online interviews can occur at any time of the day and night. Our approach is to look at batches as they come in, especially those responses and response patterns for people who have not completed the interview. We download the data and identify any respondents that need to be followed up either with a reminder to complete or a telephone interview.

Five percent of each interviewer's work was monitored using CATI monitoring facilities, which enable the supervisor to view the interview on a monitor whilst listening to the interviewer and respondent. Wallis maintains accreditation to the ISO 20252:2019 standard, specifically designed for Market and Social Research companies. The standard requires that at least 5% of all interviews must be monitored by listening to at least 75% of the interview. Wallis exceeds the standard by also aiming to monitor every interviewer during every shift.

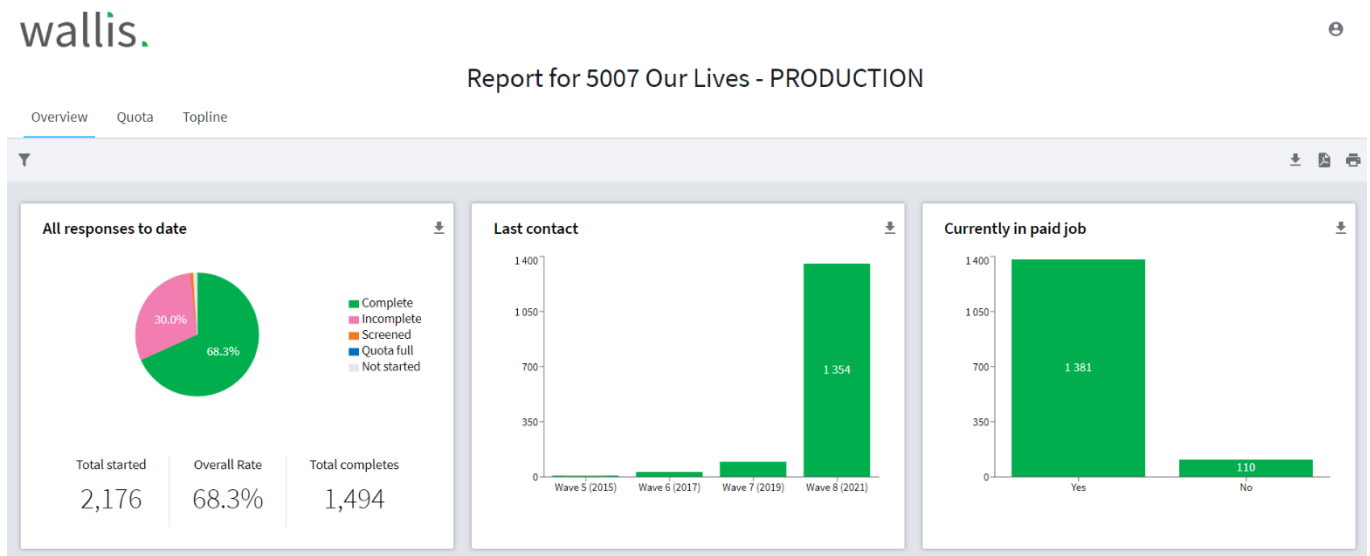
This comprehensive approach to survey monitoring has the advantage that supervising staff are alerted very quickly to any interviewer who may be having difficulty with some aspect of the questionnaire (or their technique). If this occurs, the interviewer can be counselled in the early stages of fieldwork. Importantly, it also assists supervisors in providing positive reinforcement to those who are performing at an above average level and are 'raising the bar' for all interviewing staff.

1.8 Fieldwork dashboard monitoring

Wallis provided ACU with access to a custom-built online field report dashboard. The web-based report produced daily updates that displayed the number of interviews completed, by method of completion and by last contact.

The screenshot in the figure below displays some of the information that was available for ACU to access at any time during fieldwork.

Figure 2 Our Lives Wave 9 Fieldwork Dashboard





2 Sample management

2.1 Survey invitation

Considering the various contact details that are missing from certain respondents, Wallis approached respondents by email and SMS depending on the details available.

On the 13 September 2023 a Primary Approach Email (PAE) was sent to sample members with an active email address. This was followed by an approach SMS to respondents with a mobile number from the OurLives alpha tag on 19 September 2023.

In 2023 a new template for email invitations and reminders was used to make the emails look more professional and legitimate, this can be seen in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3 Approach materials screenshots



Hi Ash,

Don't forget to complete your Our Lives survey – your responses help to ensure young Australians are better supported.

We recently contacted you to participate in the **Our Lives: Life at 30 Survey**.

The survey only takes 20 minutes to complete.

Start Survey



2.2 Survey reminders

Throughout the data collection period, several reminders were scheduled. The reminders were either in the form of a phone call, email, or SMS. Wallis distributed email and SMS reminders throughout the entire survey period.

The completed online surveys were monitored daily, and the sample management system was automatically updated to ensure that respondents who had fully completed an online survey were not recontacted by telephone and were not sent any reminder emails or reminder SMS. Wallis was also able to keep track of survey members who had commenced their survey online but did not complete it entirely. In this case, Wallis then continued to contact these survey members to remind them to complete the survey either over the phone or online.



The initial invitations were followed by email reminders where email addresses were available. All respondents that had not yet completed their survey received reminder emails.

A total of ten reminder emails were sent, and directly resulted in 575 survey completions (see Table 2 in the following section for detailed breakdown by reminder).

Email reminders



Where a mobile number was available, an SMS reminder was sent advising that contact had been attempted and to remind them to participate in the study. The SMS also provided a personalised link to the survey and listed the Wallis 1800 number and email address to contact with any queries. The SMS was sent from the 'OurLives' Alphanag so that respondents could identify who was sending them the messages.

A total of three SMS reminders were sent, each using tailored language matching the timeline of the survey. These SMS reminders directly resulted in 199 survey completions (see Table 2 in the following section for detailed breakdown by reminder).

SMS reminders



When contacted by phone, respondents are asked if they would prefer to complete the survey immediately with an interviewer or online. If the respondent was unable to conduct the interview at the time of the call, Wallis' telephone interviewing system allowed the interviewer to send an email or SMS the respondent their personalised survey link while they were on the phone. The survey would be sent instantly, making it easier to action and complete immediately.

Interviewer prompted SMS and Email

Having the option to receive the link either by SMS or email was appreciated by respondents, with 69 respondents completing their survey from an instant link.

2.3 Continuation of the Prize Draw

In Wave 9 all respondents were eligible to go into each of two prize draws, given they had completed the survey before the cut off time the day before each prize draw.

All sample members who completed the survey before 12am the day of each of the two prize draws were given the chance of winning one of:

- 1 x \$500 eGift Card, or
- 5 x \$100 eGift Cards.

There were two prize draws, each worth \$1,000, with the total prize pool for 2023 being \$2,000 worth of gift cards.

The prize draws were conducted on 1 November 2023, and 1 December 2023. Winners were notified by telephone and/or email using the most recent contact details provided.

eGiftcards were sent by email to an email address nominated by the respondent.



3 Response Outcomes

3.1 Sample

A close review of the sample was conducted prior to Wave 9 (2023) fieldwork. Respondents who had not completed a survey since before Wave 5 (2015) were deemed highly unlikely to participate in the Our Lives study again and were flagged for permanent removal from the sample. It was determined that these records would be excluded from the Wave 9 sample as they had received multiple opportunities to re-join the cohort, despite repeated calls, SMSs, letters, and emails over the past six years. Excluding these avoidant or un-contactable records from the Wave 9 sample allowed precious CATI hours to be focused on records more likely to complete the survey.

This exercise resulted in a more targeted and reduced sample of 2,186 respondents invited to participate in the Wave 9 (2023) survey. This is reduced from a starting sample of 2,410 in Wave 8 (2021).

3.2 Outcomes

3.2.1 Response rates

Table 1 below shows an overall response rate of 70% was achieved for Wave 9 (including 31 partially completed surveys). The refusal rate for Wave 9 decreased to 0.8% (3% in Wave 8).

Overall, most (88%) (94% in Wave 8) respondents were able to be contacted, with 12% unreachable, a higher proportion compared to the previous wave (6% in Wave 8).

Respondents were unreachable either because of insufficient or incorrect contact details (31%), or because contact attempts were unsuccessful (e.g. phone continuously not answered, emails not responded to), or the phone number supplied was disconnected (68%). Sadly, it was found that one respondent had passed away since completing their last interview in 2021.

Table 1 Overall response rate

Overall response rate	Overall	
	n=	%
Interviews	1,494	68.3
Partially complete	31	1.4
Refused	18	0.8
Contact made but interview not obtained	390	17.8
Subtotal contact made	1,933	88.4
Unable to track (insufficient/incorrect contact details)	79	3.6
Deceased	1	<1.0
No contact made (continual answering machine, no answer, disconnection)	173	7.9
Subtotal no contact made	253	11.6
TOTAL	2,186	100

3.2.2 Mode of completion

Overall, approximately 94% of respondents overall completed their Wave 9 survey online. Only about 6% of respondents completed their interview by phone, a similar proportion as Wave 8 (96% and 4% respectively).

Figure 4 Mode of completion



3.2.3 Response by reminder method

Table 2 below shows the total number of completes resulting from the different reminder methods. It clearly demonstrates the value of utilising a wide range of contact methods with each method providing a similar success rate.

The table gives a very detailed look at the response per reminder. Overall, the initial email invitation (20%) and the first email reminder (13%) generated the most survey completions. After the first email reminder the response rate for all subsequent reminders eased.

In addition to the responses in Table 3, 69 interviews were completed online because of the CATI interviewer connecting with the respondent and immediately resending the survey link via email (38) or SMS (31).

Table 2 Response rate by reminder

Date	Reason for contact	Contact Method	TOTAL		
			Total	Response rate of those contacted	
			<i>n=</i>	<i>n=</i>	%
13-14/09/2023	Primary Approach Email (PAE)	Email	2,167	440	20.3
19/09/2023	Primary Approach SMS (PA SMS)	SMS	1,712	148	8.6
25/09/2023	Email Reminder 1	Email	1,616	214	13.2
3/10/2023	SMS Reminder 1	SMS	1,320	95	7.2
9/10/2023	Email Reminder 2	Email	1,307	72	5.5
17/10/2023	Email Reminder 3	Email	1,192	111	9.3
23/10/2023	SMS Reminder 2	SMS	1,010	65	6.4
31/10/2023	Email Reminder 4	Email	878	15	1.7
9/11/2023	SMS Reminder 3	SMS	915	39	4.3
14/11/2023	Email Reminder 5	Email	843	36	4.3
21/11/2023	Email Reminder 6	Email	791	17	2.1
30/11/2023	Email Reminder 7	Email	770	24	3.1
6/12/2023	Email Reminder 8	Email	725	20	2.8
14/12/2023	Email Reminder 9	Email	693	37	5.3
4/01/2024	Email Reminder 10 (Final)	Email	632	24	3.8

3.2.4 Call outcomes

In Wave 9, about eight-in-ten (82%) of all calls made resulted in direct contact with the respondents or with someone that could verify whether the respondent's details were still correct. This reflects positively on the pre-field sample exclusions made, with most respondents being contactable and considered to be a 'live' record, rather than spending precious CATI hours contacting respondents who are proven to be unreachable in previous years.

During the first few weeks of fieldwork, up until the point where two email reminders and one SMS reminder had been sent, only a small CATI interviewing team were making telephone calls. The primary focus of this small interviewing team was to conduct reminder calls to the 'hard-to-reach' respondents (those with fewer contact points i.e. only email and no SMS, or vice versa). If a respondent was only willing to do the survey over the phone however, Wallis' interviewers completed the interview over the phone.